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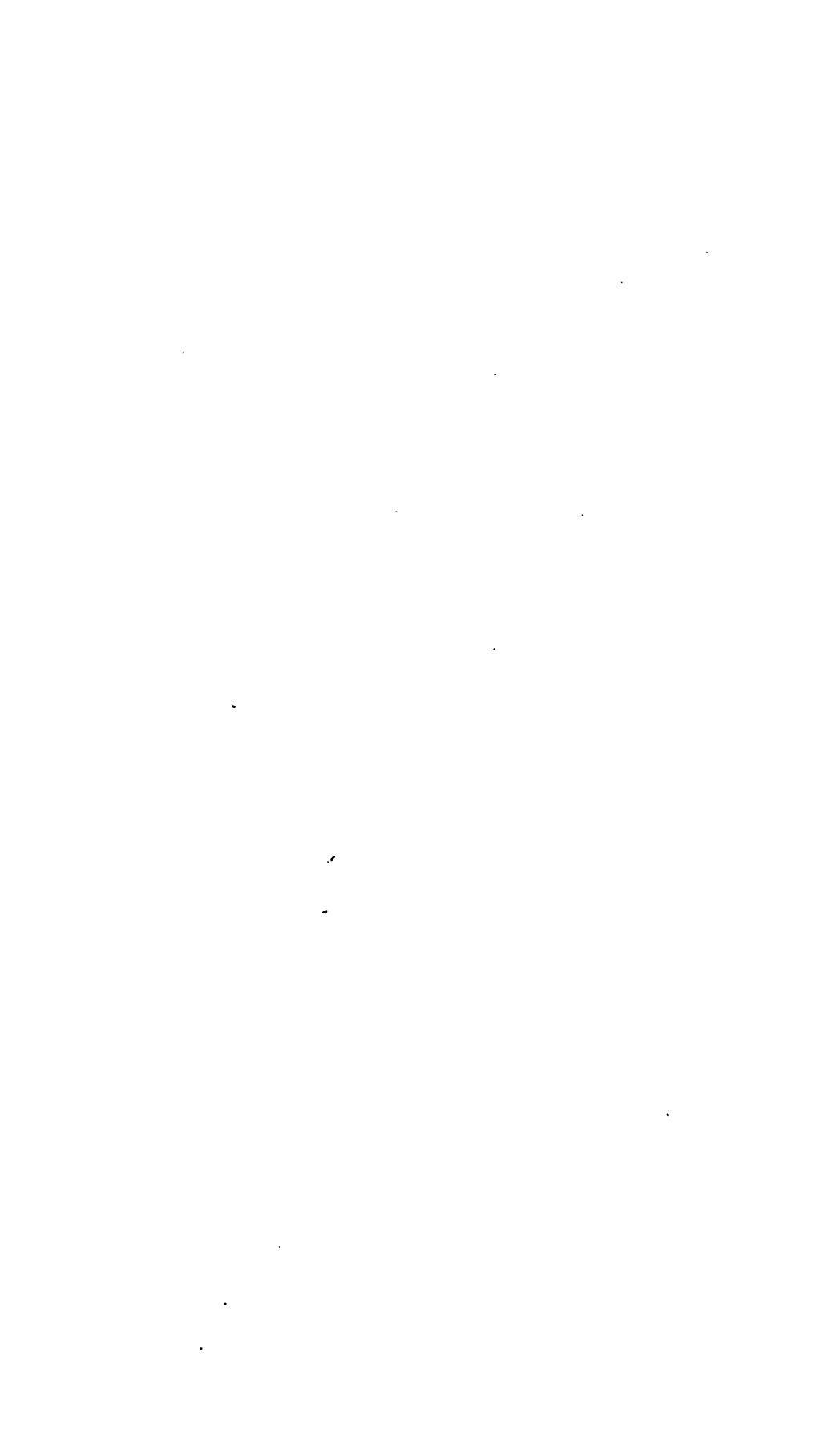
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GREAT MEN:

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THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE

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AT THE

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GREAT MEN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE age in which we live has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. In these days of civilization and enlightenment, of industry and enterprise, of trade and manufacture, of steam and electricity, of scientific discoveries and inventions, there are on all sides cheering indications of material improvement and prosperity. But the age does not seem to be very favorable to the spiritual interests of man. In the midst of all this pomp and splendour of material prosperity, ill fares the spirit. While the senses enjoy an endless variety of physical comforts, the soul droops and pines in an uncongenial atmosphere. Modern civilization is eminently and essentially materialistic. All departments of thought and speculation are more or less of this character. The politics of the age is Benthamism, its ethics Utilitarianism, its religion Rationalism, its philosophy Positivism. All seems dull, mechanical, unspiritual, and lifeless. In the discharge of moral and religious duties especially, and in all concerns affecting the interests of the soul, men follow not the high and immutable principles of conscience, but the low and convenient standard of conventionalism. All the nobler instincts and aspirations are smothered by the ignoble worship of custom and tradition. The orthodox fondly look through the vista of by-gone ages to a romantic past, peopled with saints and prophets and angels of God, adorned with all that is fairest and goodliest and holiest, and illumined by God's direct revelations; and they fancy that by believing in that they will be saved. Those, on the other hand, who are beyond the pale of orthodoxy are giving themselves up to the wild vagaries of

free-thinking and scepticism, though outwardly, for politic reasons, they conform as strictly to forms and symbols as the orthodox. Thus, as regards both those who are within and those who are outside the orthodox church, there is underneath apparent conformity a striking absence of spiritual faith—that faith which is “the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for.” From the bigotry and dogmatism of traditional creeds to the cold abstraction of rationalism, the entire religious life of the nineteenth century betrays a lamentable want of spiritual insight, and of that direct inspiration which alone can give us light unto salvation. From such tendencies, which characterize the civilization of the present age, India is not altogether free. Decrepit with age as she is in relation to her ancient greatness, and quite in her infancy in relation to modern civilization, she has with peculiar readiness caught this wide-spread contagion. Politically and intellectually, England is our master. We have been brought up in the school of English thought, and have been inoculated with Western ideas and sentiments. Hence is it that we see in India a dim reflection of all that is going on at present in civilized Europe. The physical resources of the country are undergoing wonderful expansion and development, and everywhere we behold daily multiplying signs of material prosperity. The intellectual gloom which for centuries covered its face is being dispelled by the rays of liberal education, and the mists of idolatry and superstition are fast disappearing. But alas! what have we instead of these? The materialism of modern civilization. Utilitarian views have already spread far and wide among the educated classes, and Positivism counts its followers by hundreds. Few care about the sacred interests of the soul; and those who do, rest satisfied with a few vague rationalistic dogmas. It is certainly the duty of all who are interested in the welfare of India, to endeavour to check, in due season, these sceptical tendencies of the age, and to infix in the minds of the rising generation such positive ideas of the higher truths of religion as may enable them to attain the blessings of salvation. To put forth my humble efforts in this direction, so far as my limited capacities will allow, is the main object I have in view in appearing before you this evening. The people of India must be roused from their lethargy and apathy, and saved from the dangers of smooth but treacherous materialism. This life of

spiritual stagnation that we see around us is woful; this spreading infection of sceptical fancies is appalling. The enslaved spirit of the nation must rise and bestir itself freely to the holy activities of the higher life. That question is or should be as solemn and pressing with us in India now as it ever was elsewhere,—“What shall I do to be saved?” And for a proper and practical solution of this question, we must, with sincere and humble hearts, rely on God, and pray without ceasing that He may reveal Himself to us, and purify and regenerate us by the direct action of His holy spirit. For, in order that we may be sanctified and saved, we must hold direct and personal communion with God, each for himself, and so feel and establish our relations with Him, that our hearts may be for ever open to His living and holy inspiration. And as God communicates His spirit to us in certain mysterious ways, a proper comprehension of the secret of such communication is obviously of great importance to our salvation. Thousands, we know, have, in all ages, searched for truth and God in the dry wells of ancient traditions and outward symbols, to satisfy their spiritual thirst; but it was not till they discovered and drank of the deep fountain of divine revelation, that they felt truly blessed with the pure water of saving truth. It is therefore necessary to inquire how God reveals Himself to man.

The first manifestation of God is in nature, and it is from this that the earliest religious impressions of men and nations have been derived. This is the primary and ordinary revelation of God, and one which is accessible and intelligible to all alike. Man, in the simplicity of his uneducated mind, and without the aid of logic or philosophy, “traces nature up to nature’s God.” He cannot but do so. The universe exhibits on all sides innumerable marks of design and beauty, of adaptation and method, which he cannot explain except by referring them to an Intelligent First Cause, the Creator of this vast universe. Each object in nature reminds us of its Maker, and draws the heart in spontaneous reverence to His infinite majesty. The stupendous Himalayas, the vast deep Atlantic, the flowing rivulet, the fragrant and beautiful rose, the warbling bird, and all that is grand and beautiful in the world below, and the heavens above, “declare the glory of God, and shew His handiwork,” and inspire devotional feelings in the soul towards Him who made them. Verily, there are “tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in

stones, and good in every thing." But is God manifest in the universe simply as its Maker—who created it, but has no connection whatever with it at present? Does the universe bear the same relation to God as the watch does to the watch-maker? Certainly not. The world cannot exist for one moment without God. He is its life and power. He is the power of all secondary powers, the true life of all living beings. He is the immanent power of the world; its in-dwelling life. The same power that created men and things supports them. They can have no independent power or existence apart from their Maker. In Him we "live and move and have our being." It is not true as some would have it, that God created the world, invested each object and being with certain powers, and left them to work independently, according to certain fixed laws. Law simply denotes mode of action, and can have no agency; while the secondary powers inherent in objects, which indeed act and produce all the striking effects and phenomena we behold in nature, are dependent upon the primary power of the Almighty. God the Creator should not be conceived apart from God the Preserver. If the world is real, it is real because of the divine power which animates it, and constitutes its immanent vitality. But is it merely the intelligence and power of God that we see in nature? We perceive His goodness in the countless and varied bounties which He showers on us, and which make us gratefully bow to Him as our Merciful Father, who not only makes us live but renders life agreeable. It is He who supplies our daily wants; and even before we came into the world He made ample provisions necessary for our sustenance and well-being. He taketh care of each one of us, and is the giver of every good that we enjoy. This is a great fact and cannot be ignored—God's providence. There are some, however, who affect to dispose of it as a general providence, the effect of God's general administration of the world on each individual life, and therefore not a matter for special thanksgiving. The imposing plausibility of such an argument cannot pervert the unsophisticated simplicity of human nature, or restrain its spontaneous and generous impulses. Let these men argue that, as God does not directly give into their hands their daily bread, He can have no special claim on their gratitude, for He shows no special goodness to them. Men with simple and natural hearts will, however, believe that the food they

eat and the pleasures they enjoy are all the gifts of Providence ;—the necessary effects of a general economy, it is true, but not less the generous gifts of special kindness to each individual recipient of the same. Between general and special providence there is no difference in fact. It is God's goodness viewed from different stand-points that makes the distinction. The Creator of the universe is the Father of each individual man. All His dispensations are general as regards the world at large, but they are special so far as they fall within the bounds of our individual life, and are respectively partaken by us. The same sun that gives light and heat to millions of men, may be viewed either as a part of the general economy of the world, conducive to general prosperity, or it may be gratefully looked upon by each individual man as manifesting God's mercy towards him. Hence to each of us God stands in the relation of Father for the manifold blessings He daily confers on us. And thus, while we worship God as the Creator and upholder of this vast and magnificent universe as a totality, we offer Him the grateful homage of our hearts as our Merciful Father for the particular benefits we derive from His works. Behold the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe—infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness—immanent in matter, upholding it, and quickening all its movements, and mercifully dispensing joy and blessings to all His children. Such is the revelation of nature.

But is God manifest only in matter? Is the volume of nature His only revelation to man—the only source from which we are to derive our knowledge of His nature and attributes, and our relations and obligations to Him? Does He call forth our homage and gratitude simply by His wonderful manifestations in the world of matter, and His merciful dispensation of physical comforts? No. There is another revelation; there is *God in History*. He who created and upholds this vast universe, also governs the destinies and affairs of nations. The same hand which we trace in the lily and the rose, in rivers and mountains, in the movements of the planets and the surges of the sea, regulates the economy of human society, and works unseen amid its mighty revolutions, its striking vicissitudes, and its progressive movements. History is not what superficial readers take it to be, a barren record of meaningless facts,—a dry chronicle of past events whose evanescent interest vanished with the age when they

occurred. It is a most sublime revelation of God, and is full of religious significance. It is a vast sermon on God's providence with copious and varied illustrations. Grecian mythology represents Zeus, the supreme ruler of the universe, as the father, and Memory as the mother of Clio, the muse of history, thereby shewing that the nature of history is partly divine and partly human. In fact, history is not altogether secular; it is sacred. If instead of merely looking on the surface of facts and events, where only human agency is visible, we dive beneath and trace them to the great principles which underlie them, and the energies which brought them about, we shall find that the source of all the wisdom and power they display is God. Like nature, history reveals the marvellous workings of Providence. But in what manner does God manifest himself in history? Through Great Men. For what is history but the record of the achievements of those extraordinary personages who appear from time to time and lead mankind; and what is it that we read therein but the biography of such men. The history of the world, says Carlyle, is the biography of great men. The interest of nations and epochs centres in them: eliminate them, and you destroy all history. It is with the masses of mankind as with armies: they act by their leaders, themselves unknown and unnoticed. In reading of battles, we invariably miss the names of the thousands of common soldiers who fight on either side, and meet the names only of their captains and leaders; so in the vast history of the world we miss the names of ordinary men, whom Victor Cousin justly calls "the anonymous beings of the human species;" only the names of great men strike the eye, and rivet our interest and sympathy. Such men take the lead in all the great movements of the world, the multitude always follow. They prominently stand forth in the van of society, and can hardly be confounded with ordinary men. A great man is a giant amongst a race of pigmies: he towers above the level of ordinary humanity. His greatness is unmistakable. It is through these great men, these leaders of mankind, that God reveals Himself to us in history: in short they constitute what we mean by 'God in history.'

Great Men have also been called Representative Men, Geniuses, Heroes, Prophets, Reformers, and Redeemers, according to their various functions and characteristics. Let us now

proceed to inquire what it is that constitutes great men : what are the distinctive features in their character which give them pre-eminence, and distinguish them from ordinary humanity.

But who are they, some may ask on the very threshold of the inquiry, that we should be so anxious about them? The student of history may study their career with a view to satisfy his literary curiosity, and add to his stock of historical knowledge, and may feel astonished as he reads their wonderful exploits; but beyond this what are they to him? They lived and died like other men, performing their respective parts in the amphitheatre of history: probably they did great good to their country, and evinced extraordinary ability and wisdom, and for all this posterity will readily give them credit. But what moral interest can we feel in them? Whatever importance they may possess as leading historic characters, are they of any religious importance to us? Yes, they are of the deepest interest and importance to our souls. They are destined to subserve the most momentous purposes in the moral economy of all men, of whatever race, or country, or age. With what is purely personal, local, and contingent in them we have certainly nothing to do; but that which is divine and universal in them, that which makes them great men, deeply concerns us all, for it is God's gift to us. Nations rise and fall, revolutions and wars make a wreck of society, but true greatness always lives—a standing miracle and an abiding revelation—to speak unto endless generations and unto all the nations of the earth of the inscrutable riches of God's wisdom, power, and goodness. This is the sublime purpose of the lives of great men: this makes every one of us feel a deep moral interest in them, and leads us to place ourselves in an attitude of reverent loyalty towards them, that we may receive from them the precious boon which they were designed and destined by God to confer on us. We cannot dishonor or trifle with them; we cannot dispose of them as mere great historic characters with empty praise and admiration; we must regard them as God's manifestations to each one of us, and so open the whole heart to them, that it may be filled with all that is great, noble and divine in them. We should so love and revere them, that under their influence, and with their aid, we may find Him whom they reveal.

Great men are sent by God into the world to benefit mankind. They are His apostles and missionaries, who bring

to us glad tidings from heaven ; and in order that they may effectually accomplish their errand, they are endowed by Him with requisite power and talents. They are created with a nature superior to that of others, which is at once the testimonial of their apostleship and the guarantee of their success. They are not made great by culture or experience : they are born great. They are ordained and sanctified as prophets at their birth. They succeed, not because of any ability acquired through personal exertions, nor of any favorable combination of outward circumstances, but by reason of their inherent greatness. It is God's light that makes them shine, and enables them to illumine the world. He puts in their very constitution something that is super-human and divine ; hence their greatness and superiority. They are great on account of the large measure of divine spirit which they possess and manifest. It is true they are men ; but who will deny that they are above ordinary humanity ? Though human, they are divine. This is the striking peculiarity of all great men. In them we see a strange and mysterious combination of the human and divine nature, of the earthly and the heavenly. It is easy to distinguish a great man, but it is difficult to comprehend him. A deep mystery hangs over the root of his life : the essence of his being is an inexplicable riddle. Who can solve it ? That some nations have carried their reverence for prophets so far as to deify them, and worship them as God, or rather God in human shape, does not in the least appear to me surprising or unaccountable, however guilty they may be of man-worship. For if a prophet is not God, is he a mere man ? That cannot be. Such an hypothesis would not adequately explain all the problems of his life. The fact is, as I have already said, he is both divine and human ; he is both God and man. He is a ' God-man.' He is an ' incarnation' of God. Yes, I look upon a prophet as a divine incarnation ; in this sense, that he is the spirit of God manifest in human flesh. True incarnation is not, as popular theology defines it, the absolute perfection of the divine nature embodied in mortal form ; it is not the God of the universe putting on a human body,—the infinite becoming finite in space and time, in intelligence and power. It simply means God manifest in humanity ;—not God made man, but God *in* man. Man, however great he may be, however excellent and divine his character, is human, and as such, liable to all the imperfections

and infirmities of man and the thousand evils which flesh is heir to. He is not generically different from the human kind, but is simply exalted above it in degree. Made of the same flesh and blood, endowed with the same constitution as ordinary men, he is far superior to them on account of the high destiny of his life, the divine commission he bears, and the large measure of moral force which he naturally possesses for the successful accomplishment of the same. When, therefore, he is honored above others as God's incarnation, we are to understand his superiority to be one of degree, not of kind. For, it must be admitted that every man is, in some measure, an incarnation of the divine spirit. The constitution of man is of a composite character; it is on the one hand gross, carnal and earthly, on the other holy, spiritual and heavenly. It is a strange combination of the lusts of the flesh and the divine instincts of the soul. Do we not feel that, though we are made of dust, there is within us something which is not of this earth, which is immortal and holy, born of heaven and destined for heaven? Are we not all conscious that, however sinful we may be, God dwells in each of us, inherent in our very constitution? "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The wickedness and foibles of man may be hated and pitied; but when we behold his conscience struggling successfully with sin and temptations, and with self-sacrificing devotion upholding the cause of truth, are we not led to exclaim—what is there on earth so noble as man? The human body is indeed the living tabernacle of the living God. "There is but one temple in the universe," it has been beautifully said, "and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before man is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body." However shocking man's sinfulness may be, his godliness is worthy of homage. If it is true he crawls and creeps on the low platform of the world, it is equally true he soars into the regions of heaven and enjoys its purer atmosphere. Man is verily, as the poet describes him, "a worm, a God," and he ought to be treated as such. If then incarnation means the spirit of God manifest in human flesh, certainly every man is an incarnation. And great men are pre-eminently so, for they exhibit a larger measure of the divine

spirit. They are singularly brilliant manifestations of that Eternal Light which all men in some measure reflect.

Thus you see that great men are superhuman, and, I may add, supernatural; but there is nothing miraculous about them, in the popular sense of that word,—there is no deviation from the established laws of nature. They are perfectly natural phenomena; and if they are miracles, they are only greater miracles than ordinary men. They are supernatural only in the sense of being above ordinary nature. None will deny that there are common and uncommon, ordinary and extraordinary things and phenomena in the world: but they are all included in the established economy of nature. However extraordinary a thing may be, it is not and cannot be at variance with God's law. He governs the universe with immutable and fixed laws, from which there can be no deviation whatsoever. Beneath all outward anomalies and apparent irregularities there lies the most perfect harmony. There is no disorder in nature, but it resolves itself into eternal order; no violation of a known law, but it is a fulfilment of a higher and latent law. That there is something remarkably irregular in the lives and career of great men, which ordinary facts and precedents cannot account for or explain, few will deny. They appear upon the stage of history irregularly, now and then, after long intervals and at different places, play their parts most singularly, following no custom or precedent, think and act as no contemporary does, and though hated, reviled, and persecuted, convert millions of souls to their ideas with amazing success and facility, and, with no other power but the power of those ideas, extend their conquests far and wide. And yet amidst all these apparently unaccountable irregularities the deep harmony of God's moral economy may be traced. Great men, like comets, move in eccentric orbits. As the course of comets seems irregular when compared with the movements of planets, so does the career of great men when compared with that of ordinary men. And yet comets have orbits of their own, which are perfect and regular in themselves. A comet, however strange it may seem to us, is as much a natural phenomenon as a planet, and the movements of both are regulated by the same ruling hand of God. Similarly, a prophet, however uncommon and eccentric and different from ordinary men, is guided by the same unalterable law as they.

Great men appear when they are needed. In the history of nations there occur now and then crises of a very serious character, when the advancing tide of progress shakes the very foundations of society; at such times certain great minds appear, being called forth by the peculiar necessities of the age, who avert impending perils, meet all existing wants, and remodel society on an improved basis; and they die when their work is over. Such men are seldom born in ordinary times, when everything glides smoothly and quietly; for then they are not wanted. Their lot is always cast in troublous days; for they have to combat established errors and prejudices, to revolutionize popular tastes and ideas. They mark the transition-state of society, the turning point in the career of nations. The preceding age ends and a new epoch commences in them. In the established economy of Providence they are special dispensations to meet the pressing wants of humanity. Hence their appearance is not a mere accident, a casual phenomenon, but the sequence of a regular and constant law which regulates the moral interests of mankind. Their birth is always the result of a deep and irrepressible moral necessity. Wherever and whenever peculiar circumstances demand a great man, the very pressure of that demand drags him forth perforce. In God's moral government, to feel a want is to get the thing needed. Great men cast their shadows before. The circumstances of the age foretell their birth; signs and prognostics herald their advent. We see a peculiar fermentation and upheaving and excitement on all sides. The spirit of the age can no longer brook the tyranny of the past, and shows restlessness and impatience and an earnest struggle for enfranchisement. Amidst all this struggle and turmoil, the travail of an age seeking to disburden itself, the prophet is born. All the advanced men of the time joyfully accept him as the promised liberator and redeemer, their heaven-appointed guide, and under his leadership and with his aid carry on a terrible crusade against prevalent errors and vices, and at last victoriously unfurl the banners of liberty and truth in the midst of a reformed nation. A prophet is said to regenerate his people; he infuses new life into them. In him the old generation dies, and a new generation is born. Himself the child of the past, he becomes in his turn the progenitor of an altogether new race of men. As from one small seed a whole forest may spring up, so one prophet

brings forth by the law of moral development many generations of reformed souls that lay potentially in him. Born in his spirit, these new generations continue to live in him, and he in them. His spirit courses through their veins and arteries, and moulds their character, their ideas and sentiments. They think his thoughts and feel his feelings, and however much they may advance in the path of reform, he is the root of the new life they lead.

Great men possess a representative character. They are representative in a double sense,—1. they represent their country and age; 2. they represent specific ideas. This quality is essential to greatness. I have already said that the administration of the affairs of human society is actually, though not apparently, carried on by a few leading minds; it is the aristocracy of great men that governs the world. But this aristocracy is representative, not arbitrary or despotic. Great men rule the masses, not by reason of their superior talents and energies, but because they faithfully represent the interests of those whom they govern. The secret of their gubernatorial authority, and likewise of their successful administration, lies in their unflinching fidelity to their constituents. They are essentially and thoroughly national in their sympathies, tastes and ideas; they are strictly men of the people and men of the age. Among a different nation and in a different age, they would be altogether out of place. They represent only their own people and their own age. A prophet is in fact the highest embodiment of the spirit of his country and time; the leading type of contemporaneous nationality. In him the people recognise their truest representative, and they spontaneously and trustfully throw themselves on his guidance. Nay, they often find that he understands them better even than they, and enters more deeply into their wants and wishes. It is this marvellous and mysterious sympathy which explains why he is preferred to others, albeit wiser and abler far than he; why he speaks and is respected as one having authority above all others. He rules because he serves, his people follow and obey him for he is among them as one that serveth. Their loyalty is not the cringing servile allegiance of the vassal, but the grateful homage of independent souls in recognition of the services rendered by their representative leader,—a noble testimonial of gratitude worthy alike of them who give and of him who receives it. It is not ‘hero-worship,’

not the slavish bending of the knee to mere power ; it is the tribute of respect and obedience cheerfully paid to one who is not only an extraordinary genius but a representative ruler, who is not only a ruler but a faithful servant, who best represents their wants and interests, and whom therefore they confidently invest with supreme ruling authority over themselves. The people honor themselves by honoring their prophet ; and they glorify him only so far as he is true to them.

What Napoleon said of himself, when asked to attend to the education of his son with a view to enable him to become a fit successor, applies to all great men and prophets. " Replace me ! " said he, somewhat astonished at the suggestion, " I cannot be replaced ; I am the child of circumstances." This was no hollow boast ; Napoleon said what he felt ; he mentioned a great fact of his life, the secret of his pre-eminence and success. His character and disposition and abilities were really unique, and were not the result of training, but were formed and moulded by the peculiar necessities of the age. He was the man of the age, the representative leader of his people. No amount of education or training could fit another for the position which he occupied. You must not suppose that I mean to accord to Napoleon a moral supremacy. No, I do not honor him as a prophet. I need not be reminded that he had many failings and even vices ; for all these he has been, and will ever be, condemned. But that he was a great man in his sphere, a great military genius, few will venture to dispute. It was only because he stood forth as the political representative of the people and the age, that he became a successful ruler in the cabinet and the field ; and hence he was fully justified in saying he could not be replaced by others. None but a Napoleon could fill Napoleon's place. So with regard to every great man. He cannot be replaced by others, however wise or powerful. They may be his superiors in many respects, but they lack the essential attribute which makes him a great man,—they are not representative ; the people would not recognize them as their own.

Great men are representatives in another sense : they represent particular ideas. Every great man comes into the world with a certain great idea fixed in his mind, which it is his mission to realize and stamp on his age. This idea is not an accident, but the essence, of his being. It is not a doctrine learnt from books or deduced by reasoning. It is divinely

implanted in his mind, it is inseparable from his nature, and is interwoven with his being. It is not an acquired precept, but an inborn principle of life. It is the governing principle of all his thoughts, wishes, and aspirations; the primary motive of all his movements. He lives in it and for it. His life is identified with his idea: his existence has only one meaning—the development and realization of his idea. He does not live, as others do, for the attainment of worldly happiness and honors; he does not, like them, pursue a variety of objects in the varied relations and circumstances of life. The peculiar destiny of every great man is to live and die for *one* idea. This idea is nothing more than a definite plan of the particular reform needed at the time; it is a remedy for the manifold evils of the age, a message of peace and emancipation to nations groaning under social or spiritual oppression. It is this idea that makes a great man a necessity of his age, as it shows him forth as the reformer in whom all the grievances of the nation will find redress. He cannot but be a reformer. Around him he finds society degraded, impoverished, and ruined; within him lies an ideal of what society ought to be, which constantly and necessarily seeks to realize and develop itself. His life is thus a life of continued struggle, which ceases only with his life, when his subjective idea is converted into an objective reality.

From what I have already said, certain essential characteristics peculiar to greatness may be inferred. The first is absence of selfishness. Great men do not live on their own account, they live for others. They deny themselves the pleasures and honors of earthly existence, in order that others may be enriched and exalted. They relieve and gladden their country by bearing on their own shoulders the heavy weight of its woes and sufferings. Even with their blood they wash away the evils of the world. To live unto themselves is not only wrong, but morally impossible; to seek the welfare of others is not only right, but natural to them. Their life is necessarily a life of self-abnegation. They cannot be selfish. Self-interest can have no influence on them whose interests are identified with those of society, and in whom the national pulse beats, and the national heart throbs. Constituted for public good, they would pine and languish away if confined in the suffocating atmosphere of a selfish existence.

Secondly, their sincerity. "Life is real, life is earnest," is

best illustrated in the lives of great men. They are full of earnestness. They neither deceive themselves by a mere fancy, nor do they impose upon others by hypocrisy. Devoid of theatricality and sentimentalism, they pursue their vocation in sober seriousness. There is no show, no gorgeous display: all is real. Their wisdom and devotion, their power and enthusiasm, are not things of false glitter held up to public gaze with a view to secure fame or accomplish some sinister object of worldly advancement, but sublime realities which extort admiration by the very disregard of worldly distinction which they manifest. Yet, alas! many a prophet has been, and continues to this day to be, ridiculed as an idiot or hated as an impostor,—as if a man could sacrifice his all for a fiction, as if entire nations could be revolutionized by a fraud and a deception.

Thirdly, the originality of their wisdom. Great men do not borrow their thoughts and ideas from others; they do not blindly follow the example of any earthly guide. Whatever they say, whatever they do in connection with their mission, they owe to the instincts and impulses of their natural constitution. In the depth of their minds lies the fountain of pure wisdom from which they unceasingly draw fresh supplies of original truths. Their wisdom is neither the result of hard study nor of laborious dialectic exercises: it is the wisdom of faith. They learn more by insight than by observation, experiment, or reasoning. By their natural sagacity they at once penetrate the very secret of things, which lies hid from the perception of the acutest thinker, and by common sense they readily apprehend truths which stagger the greatest intellects. Besides, the very nature of their mission precludes the possibility of their depending upon second-hand knowledge or the teachings of others. They have to reform society as they find it, by preaching those ideas and truths which it especially needs—a work alike difficult and original, requiring original wisdom and skill for its successful accomplishment. The accumulated treasures of good precepts and good examples of former times may be of some use in a general way, so far as analogies may be discovered between the past and the present, between other nations and the particular nation to be reformed. But as the past never reproduces itself in the world's history, and as no two national crises are ever wholly alike, every work of revolutionary reform, such as a great man has to perform, requires an

amount of original wisdom in discovering and communicating truth which the past can never furnish, and which he alone can bring to bear upon his mission from the natural resources of his extraordinary mind. A prophet reformer is always a genius, an inspired man; and when he teaches, the world is astonished at his wisdom, and says—never man spake so before.

Lastly, their invincible power. All great men are heroes. They have to fight, almost single-handed, against established errors and national evils, and they have consequently to achieve success against tremendous odds. Hence they are armed with uncommon firmness and determination, inflexible force of character, and a strong will that never yields and is above discomfiture; in short, they are possessed of spiritual strength and resources commensurate with their gigantic undertaking and such as insure success. The very announcement of his new ideas by the prophet excites the bitterness and hatred of thousands wedded to the old state of things. When he daringly proceeds to carry out his ideas into practice, to demolish the sacred strongholds of popular error and prejudice, he finds himself surrounded by an overwhelming host of infuriated men, desperately resolved, primarily for self-defence, but subsequently for mere malice's sake, to put down the dashing innovator. Frowns and threats, reviling and slander, excommunication and privation, coercion and torture, and even brutal attempts on life—all means are employed to accomplish this object. But opposition, however violent and deadly, cannot intimidate or overpower the mind of a hero: it rather aggravates his holy zeal a hundred-fold. Mindful more of his mission than life, he offers a bold front to the assaults of his enemies, and in the face of the direst persecution establishes his kingdom and plants the banner of the divine idea he represents. Hundreds, overpowered by his influence, acknowledge his sovereignty and vow allegiance; while thousands are made unconscious captives though professing disloyalty. Thus outwardly and secretly the new reform idea spreads, till it reaches the heart of the nation and gradually leavens the entire society. Often it happens that the prophet's life is sacrificed by his persecutors. This far from arguing anything like weakness in him, shows on the contrary his remarkable moral heroism, which shrank not, but braved death itself for the sake of truth. The mighty

influence of such heroism proves mightier far in death than in life, for the blood of a martyr always achieves more glorious and extensive conquests than the most brilliant exploits he performed in his lifetime.

But this power, it must be remembered, is not his own; it is God's power that upholds him in his struggles and trials. It is his steady and devoted reliance upon the Almighty arm that enables him to bear down the most formidable opposition, vanquish emperors and sovereigns, and establish mastery over nations and generations. He himself feels that, if he is bereft of divine succour and left to his own limited resources, he would at once sink under the weight of his trials. His heart faints and falters, trembles and shudders as he looks upon the vast sea of difficulties on which his frail bark floats, and the rising and roaring surges which every moment beat against it; and with child-like humility and trust he looks up steadily to that Almighty Protector who summoned him to the perilous enterprise, and who alone can help him to steer safely on. A prophet, though strong, is always humble: confident of divine help, he is ever diffident about his own powers. He is then only successful when he fights in God's strength, not his own. His manliness is proportionate to his child-like simplicity.

The first chapter of Jeremiah, in the Old Testament, contains a beautiful passage which describes figuratively the action of God's spirit on prophets. Jeremiah says:—

Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

The first verse evidently sets forth the important truth I have already enunciated, that a great man is never made great, he is born great. He receives his commission and ordination from God Himself, and is sent by Him into the

world for the benefit of nations. Though divinely ordained, however, he feels he has no ability to fulfil the great mission with which he is entrusted: he has no wisdom, no power; he is ignorant and weak, he is helpless as a child. The Lord, however, assures him of His protection and guidance, vouchsafes to him adequate strength and courage, and makes him "a defenced city and an iron pillar" in the midst of opposition. Hence victory ever flies round the prophet's banners, for with Divine aid he encounters human opposition.

History bears ample testimony to the extraordinary moral courage and heroism of prophets and great men, and the vast influence they exercise on the destinies of nations. The mighty Luther shook Europe to its foundations by his vigorous and fearless protests against the errors of Popery. No amount of opposition intimidated him; his adamant will knew not how to bend. When stretching forth his right hand he consigned the Pope's bull to the flames, he only gave proof of that holy fire of enthusiasm in his own mind which was to burn up the impurities of the age. While proceeding to Worms to defend himself publicly, and give an explanation of his doctrines, he refused to adopt the measures of safety recommended by his friends, saying—"Were there as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the housetops, still I would go." Methinks the whole land trembled under his manly strides as he boldly went on. All Europe, yea the world, anxiously looked forward to the great day which was to decide the destiny of Christianity, and with throbbing hearts awaited its issues. None knew what was to come out of all that commotion of the age. Emperors and princes and potentates met together on the appointed day, and amidst the assembled representatives of Europe's wealth, rank, and power, Luther stood undaunted as an apostle of freedom, and nobly asserted and vindicated his doctrines, and concluded by saying:—"I cannot and will not retract, for we must never act contrary to our conscience. I have done: God help me!" Though many and redoubtable were his enemies, and deep-rooted and sacred the errors which he combated, his cause at last triumphed, and with it the sinking pulse of Europe revived. Yes, there was a revival of a radical and comprehensive character—a revival of the soul as well as the intellect, and even of industry, in varied forms of activity. Society was altogether re-organized on a new basis, and a new life was infused into its organism.

Imagine the depth and extent of Luther's influence. Wherever there are Protestant nations or individuals there his spirit is manifest in glory : and all the fruits which the world has reaped from the Reformation are directly or indirectly the fruits of his labours. What Luther did on a large scale in Europe, John Knox accomplished on a small scale in Scotland. His power of mind was immense, as his stupendous deeds will testify. Even when a galley slave he contemptuously remarked with reference to a painting of the Virgin—it is a “pented bredd, fitter for swimming than for being worshipped.” Ever since his enthusiasm in the cause of religious reformation was formidable, and he suffered no obstacle to stand in the way of his mission. Single-handed he fought, and he not only succeeded in planting the banners of the Reformation among his countrymen, but he also made the Scotch nation. He found Scotland enveloped in darkness, Popery, and dissension ; he it was who enlightened, civilized, and regenerated it. Looking at the Scotch before his time, we find only a number of scattered tribes and clans united by no common interest, led away by proud and turbulent leaders into ceaseless intestine quarrels and feuds to gratify their ambition, no middle class to adjust the relations between the common people and their rulers and keep them in equilibrium ; in short, we find only confusion, discord, and barbarism. But to-day they are a noble people, a nation with independent and distinct national church and literature. And if you trace this glorious change to its source, you will find it due to the stern-minded reformer Knox. Turn we now to the East for similar illustrations of the power of great men. History tells us that when Mahomet entered on his iconoclastic mission he was all fire ; nothing could damp or quench his pious ardour. He was desperate even to fanaticism. If the sun stood on his right hand, said he, and the moon on his left, ordering him to hold his peace, he could not obey. And his success in establishing monotheism amidst the dense mass of ignorance and idolatry which prevailed at the time was really amazing. Behold millions owning subjection to the crescent in various parts of the world, and offering their five daily prayers to the Unseen and one only God ! Drawing nearer home we meet with an example of far greater interest to our countrymen on account of its national affinity, and one with which therefore we are likely to sympathize more readily and lovingly. Three hundred years ago, when

Bengal lay divided between empty ritualism and Vedantic contemplation on the one hand, and the immoral orgies and bacchanalian revelry of the *Shakti* worshippers on the other, when under proud priestly domination the vast bulk of the Sudra population were almost excluded from the advantages of religious life, Chaitanya, the great prophet of love and faith, appeared, and by precept and example exerted mighty influence to suppress these combined evils. The dead and dry religion of wisdom and works succumbed to the living and sweet doctrine of *Bhakti* he preached; the tide of sensuality was checked by his simplicity and purity of life; and the proud head of caste was laid low under the overpowering weight of that love of God which he taught and evinced. By infusing the element of faith into dead Hinduism he gave it new life, and made it an effective instrument of conversion. Religion was no longer the monopoly of the learned and the respectable, but the most degraded and hated, the meanest and lowest were declared eligible to God's kingdom through faith. When the new gospel of love was announced, thousands upon thousands came and swelled Chaitanya's ranks with enthusiasm; Brahmins and Chandals danced together rejoicing in their God of love. Nay—would you believe it?—Mahometans, despite the curse which Hinduism still attaches to the *Mlecha's* name, were welcomed and freely admitted into the new church. It is indeed impossible to exaggerate the power of him who effected such momentous reforms as these in the Hindu church—reforms from which English educated natives, with all their boasted enlightenment and civilization, and with all their organized and combined power, so ignobly recoil even at the present day. Chaitanya by the power of love and faith achieved triumphs which must appear to be a wonder to my educated countrymen. Such is the marvellous power, and such the incomprehensible greatness of prophet reformers:

Is it not then our duty, I ask, and shall we not esteem it a privilege, to render unto prophets and great men the humble tribute of our gratitude and esteem? The immense service they render to mankind, and the noble characteristics which distinguish them,—their deep wisdom and invincible power, their rigid self-denial and fervent devotion, challenge the spontaneous gratitude and esteem of all men. To honor them is no meanness, no sycophancy; no sordid 'Boswellism,' no idolatrous 'hero-worship,' as some foolishly imagine. To

honor them is to honor our benefactors, and to glorify the greatness of human nature. We cannot, we dare not, slight them. They are of universal interest and importance. Their lives deserve our careful study ; their greatness should excite our earnest aspiration. They are designed by Providence for our study and imitation. "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime ;" nay, they stir up our best energies to attain that sublimity of which they afford living examples. In precepts and doctrines there is indeed much to enlighten the mind ; but what can more effectively quicken it than examples ? Life alone can give life ; and above all the life of heaven-appointed prophets. It is what they have actually done that makes us understand the loftiness and sublimity which humanity is capable of, and impels us forcibly to attain that loftiness and sublimity. The world is vastly indebted to them : they are the glory, the pride of mankind ; we boast of them ; we naturally feel grateful to them. We thank Him who sends them for our benefit, and whom, as His servants and messengers, they in some measure reveal.

Let not our homage, however, be exclusively confined to any one of them, and withheld from the rest. We must honor all of them, unbiassed by local influences, party feeling, or sectarian bigotry. It is the want of this catholic spirit, it is the evil of awarding exclusive honor to particular prophets, that has filled the religious world with jealousies, hatred, and sanguinary strife, and made their followers plunge the dagger of brutal animosity into each other's breast. In fact it is this which has mainly originated sectarianism and multiplied hostile churches. In many cases, again, such exclusive honor has been carried so far as to assume the form of deification. Struck with amazement at the superhuman character of their prophet, men have in the blind zeal of extreme devotion exalted him to divinity and identified him with the Godhead ; and while adoring their own prophet as the God of salvation, they have condemned all other prophets as false prophets, who lead their followers to perdition. It is indeed painful to contemplate the two-fold evil of such sectarian bigotry. Man, mortal man, with all his frailties and shortcomings is deified and worshipped : and to him is rendered that supreme adoration which belongs to God alone ! This idolatrous bending of the knee before man is an insult to Heaven, and an audacious violation of that entire loyalty and allegiance to God

which is demanded of every true believer. Like every other form of idolatry, it is a treason against God, which pollutes the heart and degrades the soul. On the other hand, equally mischievous, if not equally sacrilegious, is the rancour with which every prophet is hated and cursed by the followers of another prophet. Every religious sect shuts up truth, inspiration, and holiness in its own narrow church, and looks upon the life and labours of its prophets as the only saving dispensation of Providence; while all prophets and truths that lie beyond its church are condemned as impostors and lies. This is making God the God of a clan, a country, and an epoch, instead of, as He is, the God of all mankind, of all space, and of all time. All true believers acknowledge the Supreme Creator of the universe as the sole object of adoration and worship; and as He is eternal and omnipresent, and his providence universal, they treat with reverence and gratitude the various dispensations of His grace made at different times and in different countries for the benefit of mankind. They see Him revealed throughout the length and breadth of animate and inanimate creation; they behold His general providence in all the ordinary events and phenomena of nature's economy; while His special providence they devoutly trace in those special dispensations which He from time to time makes through His prophets to save whole nations from error and iniquity. The lives of all such prophets are accepted reverently as God's Revelation in History: various and different they may be in their peculiar features and local adaptations, yet, as regards the universal and eternal principles they represent, they are parts of the same divine economy, and subserve more or less, in the hands of God, the same grand purposes of revelation and redemption. Each of the prophets came into the world as a messenger of God, bearing a distinct message of glad tidings which he contributed to the cause of religious enlightenment and progress. We must then freely honor all of them, and gratefully accept from each what he has to deliver, instead of binding ourselves as slaves to any particular person as the only chosen prophet of God. For "at sundry times and in divers manners God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." And though Jesus Christ, the Prince of Prophets, effected greater wonders, and did infinitely more good to the world than the others, and deserves therefore our profoundest reverence, we must not neglect that

chain, or any single link in that chain, of prophets that preceded Him and prepared the world for Him; nor must we refuse honor to those who coming after Him have carried on the blessed work of human regeneration for which He lived and died. Let sectarianism perish then. Let denominational and geographical boundaries be for ever forgotten, and let all nations unite in celebrating a universal festival in honor of all prophets, regarding them as the Elder Brothers of the human race. Hindu brethren, as ye honor your prophets, honor ye likewise the illustrious reformers and great men of Christendom. I know, my educated countrymen, you appreciate and honor England's immortal bard, Shakespeare, the greatest literary genius of the West; and you honor too the military and political and scientific great men whose brilliant deeds shed lustre on the profane history of Christian nations. Why should you scruple then to pay the tribute of your esteem and gratitude to the religious geniuses, the inspired prophets of Christendom, who have nourished and enriched its soul, and in fact the soul of humanity at large? To you, my Christian brethren, also I humbly say—as ye honor your prophets, honor ye likewise the prophets of the East. Thus hostile churches, and the dismembered races of mankind shall be knit together in one family, in the bonds of universal faith in the common Father, and universal gratitude and esteem towards their elder brothers, the Prophets.

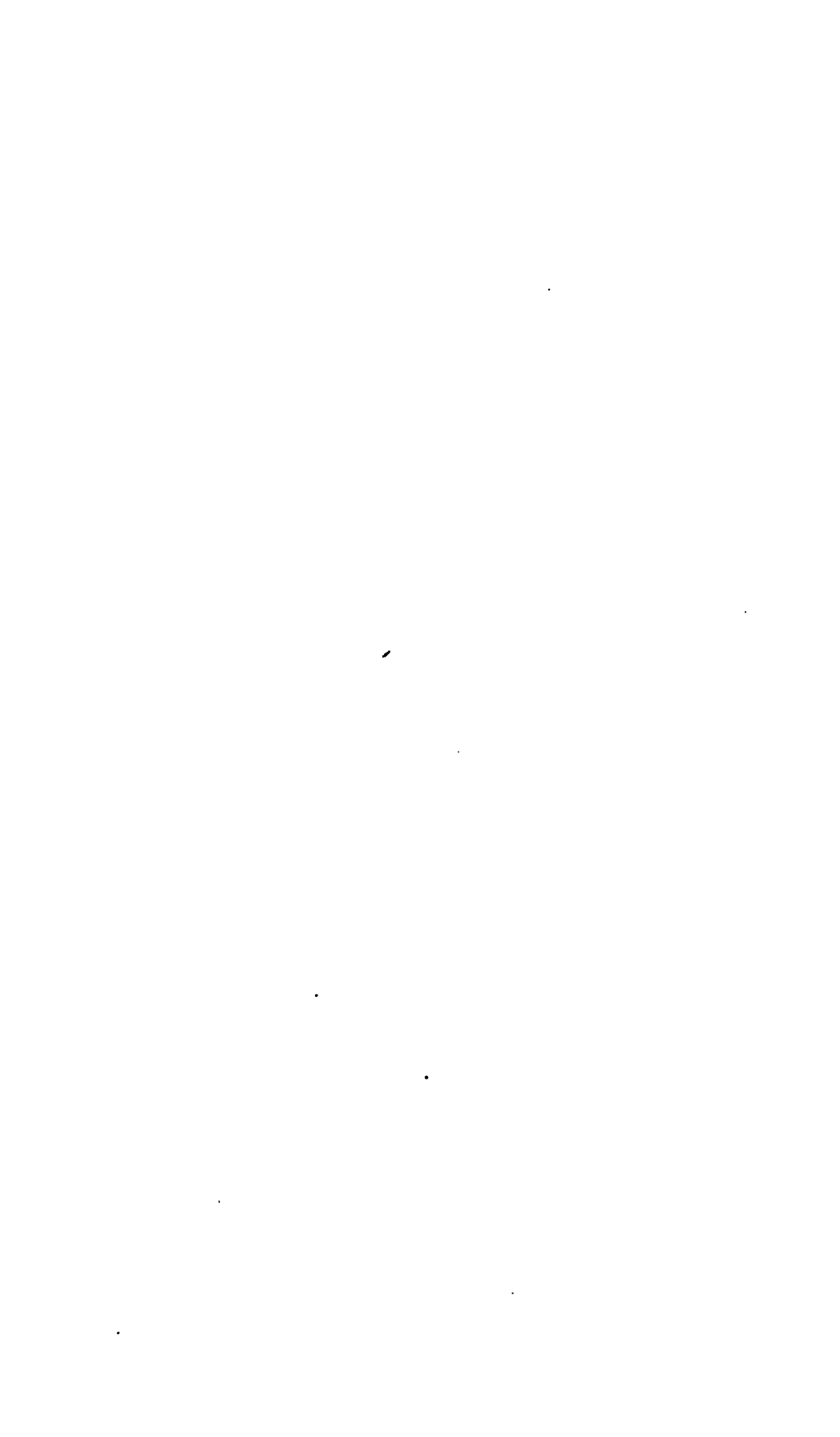
The last and highest mode of revelation remains to be described. I have spoken of God in Nature, and then of God in History; but both these forms of divine manifestation are external. The one to which I am about to draw your attention is internal, and comes home to our hearts, *viz.*,—God in the Soul. The striking evidences of the Great Creator's power, wisdom, and goodness, which are stamped on the whole face of animate and inanimate creation, do indeed exalt the believer's heart to Him; but far greater is the influence of the lives of great men, which, coming with all the moral force of example, animates and bestirs us to a life of wisdom, piety, and righteousness. Nothing, however, can bear comparison with the Almighty power of Inspiration—the direct breathing in of God's spirit—which infuses an altogether new life into the soul, and exalts it above all that is earthly and impure. It is the more powerful, being God's direct and immediate action on the human soul, while the revelation made through

physical nature and biography is indirect and mediate. In these latter modes of divine manifestation truth is received at second hand ; God is seen as reflected in a mirror, and often, alas ! refracted through its imperfections. Divinity is represented in the world of matter,—in flowing brooks and stupendous mountains, in the radiant sun, the serene moon, and the vast starry convex ; it is also represented in the thrilling precepts and the quickening deeds of great men. But in inspiration the Supreme Soul is *presented* to us in our own finite souls, and His saving light falls directly upon the eye of faith. The spirit of God directly shines upon the soul like the meridian sun, and illumines and warms the entire spiritual nature of man ; it bursts like a resistless flood into the heart, sweeps away ignorance and doubt, impurity and wickedness, and converts even the hard stony heart of a confirmed sinner into a garden smiling in all the luxuriance of spiritual harvests,—of faith, love, and purity. The highest revelation then is inspiration, where spirit communes with spirit, face to face, without any mediation whatsoever. The influence of inspiration is absorbing, not partial ; it is not superficial and skin-deep ; but like leaven it leaveneth the whole life. Its process is not slow and calculating, but revolutionary. Inspiration does not deal out particular truths and particular forms of purity to satisfy a few special wants : it altogether converts and regenerates the soul. It does not seek to cut off the spreading branches of corruption ; it destroys the root of evil in the perverted heart, and sows there a new seed of divine life. Its mode of operation differs essentially from those which worldly moralists and reformers prescribe for the eradication of vice and the improvement of individual and national character. Here we see no appeal to reason or public opinion, no calculation of profit and loss according to the arithmetic of expediency, no reference to consequences. Nor do we find here that slow process of moral discipline and restraint which seeks to school all the lower propensities and passions into obedience and place them under the authority of conscience. The vast majority of mankind, whatever their convictions may be, are practically swayed by worldly motives in their social as well as religious pursuits ; utility is the sole guide of their moral life ; they could hardly be persuaded to recognise or practise any duty which involves temporal loss of any kind, and interferes with

worldly happiness and interest. Those, however, who really desire to be good, and are sincerely anxious for their reformation, pronounce the doctrine of expediency false and pernicious, recognize conscience as the supreme guide—the viceroy of God in the human breast—and endeavour to bring all refractory passions and motives, all thoughts, words, and deeds under its discipline. They go through a systematic process of training and self-control, guarding against every possible evil, curbing down every little sin as it rises, breaking every vicious habit by constant and unwearied conflict, and employing all available means for the government and purification of the heart. They who simply seek deliverance from sin must go through this process of incessant struggle and self-control. But the soul needs more, it wants some positive vantage-ground of holiness where it may abide in peace, safe against temptation. It seeks to be not only not worldly, not immoral, but positively holy. It wants godly life, and this can never be had by the most rigid tension of mental discipline, or the highest effort of human will. Divine life can only be secured by divine grace—it comes pouring into the soul from Him who is its source. This is inspiration; it is the direct action of the Holy Spirit. It is God's free gift, not man's acquisition. It comes not through our calculation or reasoning; not through our industry or struggle, but through prayerful reliance upon God's mercy. It cannot be purchased by our wisdom or our good works. The Merciful God vouchsafes inspiration unto the heart which panteth after it. Behold the marvellous effects of divine inspiration! It does not, like human agencies of reform, merely lead the intellect to truth, the heart to love, or the will to practical righteousness; but it thrills and enlivens the whole spiritual being of man with a sort of holy excitement and frenzy, and carries him by the hair into the very presence of God, and there breathes into him new life. It revolutionizes the very foundations of the old carnal life, and effects a radical reform in the vital mainspring of man's motives, wishes, words, and deeds; it marks a turning-point in his history. It kills the "old man," and kindles his ashes into an altogether new creature. This is true spiritual Baptism—baptism, not with water, but with fire. We care not to be baptized with the cold water of logical persuasion and the lifeless ay and nay of dogmatic theology; but we all need

to be baptized into new life with the fire of inspiration and enthusiasm. In other words, if we all desire holy life we must become enthusiastic. Through proper self-culture men have in all ages attained virtue and morality ; but never man became regenerate and godly without the fire of enthusiasm enkindled by the Holy Spirit. The human mind unaided, however great its wisdom and power may be, is no match for the vile passions and lusts of the flesh. When they once rise with all their demoniac fury and frenzy, no convincing precept of ethics, no amount of human energy can quell them. To this all our experiences with one voice testify. But when the Holy Spirit reinforces the sinking spirit of man with an influx of divine enthusiasm, the rising surges of unruly passions subside as if under magic power. Only passion can vanquish passion : and a most formidable and unconquerable passion is enthusiasm. When it rushes with full force into the soul, all carnal passions readily ebb away. Lust, anger, covetousness, envy, and malice ; doubt and despair ; weakness, inconstancy, and hypocrisy, in fact all sins of the mind, heart, and the will, retire from the enthusiastic soul, and dare not encroach upon what is consecrated to God and protected by His Almighty arm. For enthusiasm is not a faculty or feeling, but is a pervading passion of life ; it combines in it all that is excellent in wisdom, emotion, and energy, and is a remedy for every form of sin and corruption. It keeps man in a state of holy excitement ; it makes him live in God ; and thus protects him from every thought, word, or deed that is unholy. In enthusiasm duty and desire coalesce, and form a settled principle of life. Man then loves holiness with passionate attachment, and hungers and thirsts after his God. He is seized with the frenzy of devotion, and is not only above sin, but also above temptation ; for nothing is then attractive to him except holiness. Such frenzy, essential as it is to divine life, is but madness in the sight of the world, and must excite ridicule and contempt. One who has realized God in his own soul, and has been inspired with enthusiastic love and fidelity towards Him, and who loves only His company and His service, lives in heaven, though on earth ; and all that he says and does must be scoffed at as madness by those who live unregenerate in the flesh ; and though he may say—"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness,"—his words avail not to convince the world. Such

enthusiastic souls, men born again through fire-baptism, live in the Kingdom of God, and enjoy, here and hereafter, the supreme felicity of living and loving communion with Him in the inner temple of their heart.





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